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THE CONDOR

A Magazine of
Western Ornithology

Published Bi-Monthly by the
Cooper Ornithological Club

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EDITORIAL NOTES AND NEWS

The annual Cooper Club roster published in this issue shows a present membership of 6 honorary, 4 life, and 535 active members, considerably more than for any previous year. It is requested that any errors in the roster be promptly reported to one or the other of the Club secretaries.

At least two active ornithologists are directing their attention to Alaska this year. Mr. F. Seymour Hersey, of Taunton, Massachusetts, has left Seattle for St. Michael, on Behring Sea, to collect specimens, and especially to take photographs, during the summer, in the interests of Bent's "Life Histories of North American Birds". Mr. Hersey will thus be working from the same base that Nelson did thirty-five years ago. Mr. George Willett has left California to spend another summer on Forrester Island, southeastern Alaska, where a very great deal doubtless yet remains to be learned concerning the hordes of water birds which resort to that isolated locality for the nesting season. We hope that he succeeds in finding the eggs of the long-sought-for Marbled Murrelet!

Those of us who have the museum instinct well developed are often pained to read in

a collector's narrative that some rare specimen has been thrown away as being "too far gone to skin". There is increasing need for osteological material, and it is a shame that any perfectly good specimens for such purposes should be destroyed. It is a very simple matter to remove the major portion of the soft parts from a dead bird, wrap in the feet and head with a little thread or twine, and hang it up to dry; or else to roll it in dry cornmeal, which will retard decay, and ship it at once to some museum. Of course a tag should be affixed, giving the sex, as ascertained by dissection, exact locality, date, and name of collector. Bodies of skinned birds might well be saved in similar fashion. As previously stated in these columns, it is becoming more and more incumbent upon the collector of birds to justify the privilege he enjoys, by making the greatest possible use of the material he gathers.

On another page of this issue Mr. A. C. Bent does American ornithology an excellent service by correcting an important error in identification, by reason of which error a record of occurrence far beyond the normal range of the species in question has stood in our literature for many years. We can see no reason for attempting to defend the perpetrator of any erroneous record, where such has been made without exhausting every reasonable means of verification. As Mr. Bent says, it is lamentably difficult to eliminate a faulty record from our literature. It is vastly better to make every possible effort toward accurate determination of both the circumstances of capture and the identity of the species before venturing into print. In this day of many museums, and with willing experts whose services may be elicited in making comparisons of specimens, it looks as though we ought to be able to escape such blunders.

It is with the deepest regret that we announce the death of an active Cooper Club man, F. E. Newbury. This took place at his home in San Francisco on March 16, 1915. Mr. Newbury came to California from the East in 1903, and located in San Francisco as an optician, in which profession he was very successful. We learn through Mr. Harry S. Hathaway of Providence, R. I., a long-time friend of Newbury, that the latter was a man of quiet, unassuming manner, who loved his friends, home and family above all else. He was an agreeable companion and a hard worker in the field. He studied birds and collected birds' eggs, chiefly for recreation, and had gathered a not large, but decidedly choice series of personally collected sets.

Harry K. Pomeroy, an active member of the Cooper Ornithological Club died at his home in Kalamazoo, Michigan, on January 27, 1915. Pomeroy was born in Lockport,

New York, April 3, 1865, and moved to Kalamazoo in 1872. His favorite study was ornithology, and his collection of birds, nests, and eggs is one of the best in his State. The many friends who enjoyed the privilege of Pomeroy's acquaintance bear witness to his kindly nature and earnest helpfulness. Although always residing in the East, he was deeply interested in Western ornithology, and followed closely the results of the work of others, as reported in current magazines.

Dr. Barton W. Evermann and Mr. Joseph Mailliard spent a week in April in the Kern Valley district of the extreme southern Sierra Nevada. Their prime object was to learn further details of the manner of occurrence of the remarkably restricted Kern Red-winged Blackbird, lately described by Mr. Mailliard. The trip was a success, and the results will be reported in due time.

COMMUNICATION

BECK AT CAPE HORN

Editor THE CONDOR:

Having rounded the Horn safely in our twelve-ton cutter, and being anchored within fifteen miles of that well-known landmark waiting for one of the ordinary gales to let up, a line to you will pass away a few minutes until the candy boiling on the floor of the cabin on a seventy-eight-cent oil stove bought in San Francisco is pronounced by Mrs. Beck ready for eating. We passed somewhat closer to Cape Horn than do most of the passers-by, going inside the two outer rocks which lie a half mile or so to the southward.

The blue-eyed, white-breasted cormorants were nesting on a pinnacle rock to the westward, recalling the murre rookeries of Alaskan islands. Albatrosses and sooty shearwaters sailed high and low about us. Skuas flew by in rapid flight to some distant fishing point, and frequently penguins would show for a brief moment above the choppy sea.

If the captain of the boat had not been so anxious to take me back alive to Punta Arenas, I might have landed and gone up on top of the Horn for a look around; but the uncertainty of the winds and their rapid changing from one point to another, as well as the sudden manner in which they increase most forcefully in strength, prevented. As it was, the nice breeze we had, picked up after dinner into half a gale, and it felt most comfortable to run into a sheltered cove and anchor.

In the last five weeks, three days have passed without rain, snow or hail, and I'm hoping for as many more on the return trip. Some days but a squall or two, and others a continual drizzle, makes the raincoat constantly necessary. Compared with the off-shore ranging of the common California albatross, the fishing here by the common albatross in these southern channels bordered on either side by snow-topped hills is interesting. The island land-bird life is rather barren though, as compared with the Aleutian Islands of Alaska. One misses the ptarmigan, the cheery snowflake and the brightly colored leucosticte, although the latter has a counterpart here in a rarely noticed, black-chinned finch that inhabits rocky hillsides. Sea-birds are plentiful, and I have seen nesting colonies of terns, gulls, shags, penguins, shearwaters, and albatrosses.

Sincerely,

R. H. BECK.

Cape Horn, Chili, January 3, 1915.

PUBLICATIONS REVIEWED

REPORT ON BIRDS COLLECTED AND OBSERVED DURING APRIL, MAY, AND JUNE, 1913, IN THE OKANAGAN VALLEY, FROM OKANAGAN LANDING SOUTH TO OSOYOOS LAKE. By E. M. ANDERSON. (Report of the Provincial Museum of Natural History for the year 1913, Victoria, British Columbia, Jan., 1914, pp. 7-16.)

REPORT OF BIRDS COLLECTED AND OBSERVED DURING SEPTEMBER, 1913, ON ATLIN LAKE, FROM ATLIN TO SOUTH END OF THE LAKE. By F. KERMODE and E. M. ANDERSON. (*Ibid.*, pp. 19-21.)

BIRDS COLLECTED AND OBSERVED IN THE ATLIN DISTRICT, 1914. By E. M. ANDERSON. (Report of the Provincial Museum of Natural History for the year 1914, Victoria, British Columbia, January, 1915, pp. 8-17.)

The lists contained in the above cited papers include what may be accepted as practically complete catalogues of the summer birds of the regions treated. As little or nothing has been published heretofore regarding the birds of the Atlin district and of Okanagan Valley, of extreme northern and extreme southern British Columbia, respectively, these contributions are consequently of importance, and as evident care was taken in the collection and proper identification of specimens, they may be taken as authoritative.

From Okanagan Valley one hundred and twenty-nine specimens are listed; from the